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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this New York state curriculum guide is to present an overview of the special problems of self-esteem in girls and young women and to provide suggested class activities that might be helpful in promoting self-esteem. Part 1 presents questions and answers concerning: (1) why focus on self-esteem for young women; (2) what is self-esteem; (3) what is the school's role in relation to self-esteem; and (4) how can teachers help. Part 2 describes specific class activities related to enhancing self-esteem for elementary, junior high, and senior high school students. Suggested evaluation procedures, eight resource sources, and 19 references are included. (JHP)

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PROMOTING SELF-ESTEEM IN YOUNG WOMEN

A MANUAL FOR TEACHERS

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The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department
Division of Civil Rights & Intercultural Relations
Albany, New York 12234

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FOREWORD

With all of the publicity and attention currently being focused on improving the achievement and completion rates of students identified as "at risk," it is not suprising that school personnel are looking for ideas and materials to strengthen the elements identified as supporting that effort. Aiding all students in acquiring a sense of identity and self-esteem is an essential component of any comprehensive strategy addressing this goal.

This publication does not claim to provide teachers with in-depth diagnostic instruments or a fool-proof panacea. The purpose of this publication, however, is to give an overview of some of the special problems of self-esteem in girls and young women and to provide suggested classroom activities that can be helpful in promoting self-esteem in girls and young women. Because some of the factors involved in low self-esteem experienced by minority males are sometimes similar to those of girls and young women, several of the methods and activities can be adapted to their issues.

The first section of this publication provides questions and answers related to self-esteem, how schools and teachers can help, and why teachers should focus on self-esteem, particularly for young women. The second section of this manual offers suggested classroom activities for use with elementary, junior high/middle school, and high school students. All of the classroom activities have been designed to be used in classes with both boys and girls. It is anticipated that boys and young men will also benefit from these suggested activities.

This publication is the product of the Division of Civil Rights and Intercultural Relations. It was written by Dr. Rosemary Agonito, Gender Equity Consultant, New Futures Enterprises, with Michael J. Moon, Program Manager for Title IV Civil Rights Act Sex Equity, Division of Civil Rights and Intercultural Relations. We extend our appreciation to the following for their review and suggestions: Dr. Joseph Gerdin of the Division of Child Development, Parent Education and Pupil Support Services; Affirmative Action Office; and the Commissioner's Statewide Advisory Council on Equal Opportunity for Women.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Why should we focus on self-esteem in young women? Surely, self-esteem problems are found in both boys and girls.

It is certainly true that young women and men can suffer from low self-esteem and those problems must be addressed in both. However, girls and women have a host of special self-esteem problems related to their gender which need to be understood and addressed.

While more research is needed, it is becoming increasingly clear to psychologists, educators, and women's rights advocates that self-esteem problems lie at the heart of many educational concerns relating to young women, including the following: underestimation of personal ability, failure to consider the full range of career options (including non-traditional occupations), teen pregnancy, teen single parenthood, poor academic performance, fear of success, lack of assertiveness, feelings of victimization, excessive need for the approval of others, and poor self-image (especially of body).

What is the source of the special self-esteem problems young women suffer?

No one source can be pointed to, but a host of historical and cultural problems bear on the issue.

Through much of recorded history, women have traditionally been viewed as inferior to males. This sense that women are less valuable is historically reflected in popular culture, in the law, in male/female positions in social and institutional hierarchies, in many religions, in social restrictions on the female, and in the writings of the "great thinkers."

This historical devaluation of the female has also expressed itself in stereotypical views of girls and women that are deeply imbedded in attitudes and assumptions spanning thousands of years. Among these stereotypes are the following:

1. Women are less rational and less logical than men.
2. Women are emotional creatures who cannot be trusted with important matters.
3. Women are sexual creatures who often play the role of temptress.

4. Women are weak.
5. Women do not make good leaders.
6. Women belong in the domestic sphere with their children.
7. A woman should be attached to, and protected by, a man.
8. Women are not interested in success, money, and power.

Many of these assumptions persist today in some form. These stereotypical messages, however subtle or obvious their expression may be, are "heard" by girls and young women. Often, the message is internalized by young women, that is, incorporated as a value within the self and about the self.

These internalized stereotypes play a part in shaping the effect of individual circumstances on a young woman's developing self-concept. The result too often is low self-esteem for young women.

Will the focus on promoting self-esteem in young women be detrimental since it "buys into" differentiating between boys and girls?

This is an important issue to note. On the one hand, we are trying to minimize unnecessary male-female differentiation because it so often undermines self-esteem. On the other hand, we are trying to undo the damage done to female identity by providing a positive sense of what it means to be female and by affirming the value of womanhood. This is a paradox and makes for some ambiguity in approach.

Because the way we often treat people is still gender-based, we must work to build a positive female identity, while at the same time working on the long-term goal of building institutions and processes that treat people as humans (not as members of a sex, race, or other group). It is a paradox common to transition periods and one we need to accept as unavoidable in the short term.

All of the classroom activities suggested in this manual have been designed to be used in classes with both boys and girls. It is anticipated that boys and young men will also benefit from these suggestions and experiences.

What is self-esteem?

Self-esteem refers to regard for the self, that is, the feelings a person has about her or his worth generally. It relates to how individuals estimate their own intrinsic value.

How is self-esteem different from self-confidence?

Self-confidence is the behavioral side of self-esteem. Self-confidence refers to how an individual's self-esteem translates into behavior when interacting with other people.

What is meant by "low" or "high" self-esteem?

Low self-esteem refers to an individual's feelings that she or he has little or no worth. Individuals with low self-esteem do not see themselves as valuable human beings.

High self-esteem refers to an individual's feelings that he or she has considerable worth. Individuals with high self-esteem generally feel good about themselves and believe in their intrinsic value.

What makes up high, or positive self-esteem?

Positive self-esteem is generally recognized as having at least four components:

1. Individuality ("I am somebody.") — a strong sense of myself as a unique individual with rights and needs, as well as obligations, and an appreciation of my body and mind as special.
2. Connections ("I belong.") — a sense of being respected for myself and being connected, both with others and within the social context, present and past.
3. Power ("I am competent.") — a sense that I can influence the circumstances of my life, that I have skills, and that I am in control of what happens to me.
4. Options ("I have possibilities.") — exposure to models and the ability to envision a wide range of possibilities for myself such that I can set my own goals.

Notice that individuality, connections, and power relate to well-being in the present, while options relate to hope for the future. Present well-being and future hope are both essential to self-esteem.

Where do the schools fit in this picture?

Just as students are not immune from stereotypical assumptions and messages, teachers, administrators, and other staff are not immune.

It is also important to remember that, historically, formal education was primarily the province of men. Formal education, with the exception of study in the domestic and fine arts, was designed by, and for, males. It was well into the 19th Century before young women came to be included, by some, in the system of formal education. Centuries of the male educational tradition have left a strong mark on education as we know it today. For example:

1. The curriculum lacked reference to the historical roles, accomplishments, and values of women.
2. The language of education did not include the female (i.e., freshman, Bachelor of Arts, Master's Degree, Chairman of the Department, etc.).
3. Teaching and curriculum materials, including articles and textbooks, portrayed women, (when they were included) in stereotypical roles.
4. Administrators and faculty in educational institutions (except for elementary school teachers) were exclusively male.

These traditions, to the extent that they survive today, are part of the problem and can contribute to lower self-esteem in girls and young women.

Why should the schools concern themselves with self-esteem? After all, the school's mission is to educate, and it is already overburdened with social concerns.

Evidence has been mounting for decades that academic achievement and self-esteem are positively related. A student's ability to learn depends not only on intelligence, but on his or her self-esteem. Student behavior is also affected by a student's self-esteem. In addition, teacher expectations of an individual will affect that student's performance through self-esteem.

Research also demonstrates that low self-esteem is a detriment to individual success and satisfaction. Those with low self-esteem suffer more emotional problems, expect rejection, perform poorly, take personal criticism adversely, are easily influenced by others, suffer more stress-related illnesses, express more racial prejudice, and resist change.

Clearly, schools cannot afford to ignore student self-esteem.

Given the many factors affecting self-esteem, is it really possible for the classroom teacher to make a difference in students with low self-esteem?

Yes! Certainly no one thing, or even several things, will change a child's low self-esteem. Low self-esteem works like a "self-fulfilling prophecy," a "filter" through which all events get interpreted.

However, self-development is a dynamic process and is open to change over time. The classroom teacher is in an excellent position to foster positive change and to serve as a role model. By the same token, the teacher can also be a force in lowering self-esteem.

How can a teacher help?

A teacher can provide the conditions to promote self-esteem and to help the student overcome a negative picture of the self.

Since self-esteem is largely based on the acceptance and approval of others, a good place to start is by providing unconditional positive regard for the youngster. Unconditional messages about a person's worth communicate that she or he is thought to have intrinsic value. Conditional messages link a youngster's value to certain considerations such as behavior, ability, effect on others, etc.

It is important to distinguish between the person and the person's behavior at any given moment. Everyone needs to be accepted as a person, even when particular behavior cannot be condoned. For example, in dealing with a person taking drugs: "I value you as a person, but I cannot condone your use of drugs," rather than "You are a terrible person."

What problems should teachers focus on to help overcome low self-esteem and to reinforce high self-esteem in young women?

It is important to understand the twin problems of stereotyping and bias as they relate to sexism and sex discrimination.

Stereotyping involves assigning predetermined roles and classifying or labeling people *because* they are members of a particular group (e.g., Jane Doe should not be promoted to an executive position because women are poor leaders.)

Bias (prejudice) involves how an individual perceives people based on personal or cultural values. It is the process of making a value judgment that prejudges people based on preconceived expectations which may or may not be conscious (e.g., the expectation that women are overly emotional).

Sexism is the overt expression of stereotyping or bias relative to gender, with the effect of limiting the growth or potential of the individual to whom the sexism is directed. Sexism involves the exaggeration or distortion of sexual differences or the use of sexual differences when they are irrelevant. For example, the comment, "I would never vote for a woman for president because women make poor leaders," is sexist, as is the corresponding act of refusing to vote for a woman for president. The relevant qualities (ability, motivation, experience) are ignored, and instead, an irrelevant characteristic (gender difference) is used as the criterion.

Sex discrimination involves the violation of a law or regulation. For example, if a girl wants to take a course in auto body repair in her high school, but is not allowed to take the course because she is a girl (different), the act of excluding her is sexist and discriminatory. In this case, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 would be violated because equal access and equal treatment under the law were compromised by a sexist behavior.

How do stereotyping, bias, sexism, and sex discrimination relate to self-esteem?

Stereotyping, bias, sexism, and sex discrimination directly undermine the components of self-esteem (individuality, connections, power, and options).

Stereotyping, bias, sexism, and sex discrimination:

1. Negate individuality because the person is seen and judged primarily as a member of a group (the female sex or the male sex), not as a unique individual.
2. Undermine connections because females are left out of the mainstream of history in many traditional textbooks and in many teaching approaches, leading girls to believe they have had, or will have, little to do with the growth of civilization.
3. Diminish power because males are seen as influential leaders in all spheres of life, whereas women are typically relegated to service positions.
4. Limit options because role models for jobs and positions non-traditional to one's sex are missing or in short supply.

How can teachers begin the process of freeing the classroom of stereotyping, bias, and sexism which undermine self-esteem?

It would be well to start with some guidelines on the sorts of things to do:

1. Give everyone a chance to participate in class and encourage the participation of both girls and boys. Be aware of the fact that teachers tend to call on boys more often than girls.

2. Analyze your attitudes and expectations of the young men and young women in your classes, being careful that stereotyping and bias do not play a role. Since teacher expectations can function as "self-fulfilling prophecies," conscious and non-conscious attitudes can affect students' expectations of themselves.

3. Use praise to reinforce student accomplishments, being careful not to praise in stereotypical ways (e.g., "What a neat paper, Sue. Girls are so much neater than boys," might better be "Sue, I really appreciate the time you must have put into this paper.")
   In praise, do two things, being careful that the praise is sincere and deserved:
   a. Praise the specific act, product, achievement, etc.
   b. Relate it to a more fundamental issue/belief about the self, especially when it can counter a stereotype (e.g., "Lisa, your class presentation was especially clear and coherent. I've noticed you think very logically.")

4. Use constructive feedback as often as possible in helping develop the student's sense of competency and power. As with praise, countering the stereotypes is important (e.g., "Mary, your math work this semester has improved greatly. Your remaining challenge can be dealt with by two or three sessions in the math lab which I will help you schedule. After that, I'm confident you can continue with additional math courses. Getting a solid math background is crucial to many career options.")

5. Enhance every student's chances of success, being sure that "success" is measured by small, day-to-day accomplishments, as well as "large" accomplishments. Bear in mind the old adage, "Nothing succeeds like success." Make classroom tasks do-able and interesting. Be sure the student knows you recognize his or her success.

6. Treat students as individuals responsible for what they do and for their achievements, rather than as members of a biological group (e.g., "Jane, you should do well as a fashion designer. Women really do well in that field," would be better said, "You have developed a good sense of color and design, Jane. These skills will help you succeed in fashion design.")

7. Be a good listener and observer who recognizes the stereotypical and biased limitations being put on students. Counter these whenever possible.

8. Promote cause and effect thinking, that is, the recognition that consequences are attached to attitudes and behavior. Even when behavior is socially acceptable, the consequences are not always desirable (e.g., stress on a thin appearance, which is not physiologically possible for many females, often leads to health problems; failure to prepare oneself for a career that pays a living wage often leads to economic dependency or poverty).

9. Encourage both young women and young men to assume leadership positions.

10. Promote access to all academic and technical courses for both sexes. Help students see that sex segregation in courses and programs has nothing to do with ability.
11. Encourage girls and boys to explore and engage in activities traditionally associated with the opposite sex, rather than tolerating or reinforcing segregated activities (e.g., encourage young men to try out for cheerleading, encourage young women to run for class president).
12. Always take the attitude that what is done by girls is as important as what is done by boys (e.g., girls' sports deserve the same prominence and support as boys' sports).

In addition to doing these things, what should teachers avoid?

There are additional guidelines of teaching behavior to avoid:

1. Avoid differentiated responses to boys and girls (e.g., addressing the content and quality of a boy's essay, but the neatness and appearance of a girl's essay).
2. Avoid singling out a particular sex for certain chores or activities (e.g., "Will one of the boys carry this box to the office?" "Will one of the girls clean the blackboard?")
3. Avoid separating or grouping students on the basis of gender unless there is a compelling reason, such as privacy for bathrooms or locker rooms (e.g., girls against boys in a spelling bee, or girls in one line and boys in another, is no more valid than dividing students on the basis of race, ethnicity or religion for those activities).
4. Avoid comparisons based on sex (e.g., "Good shot, Julie, you hit the ball just like a boy!" or "Get hold of yourself, Jim, you're acting like a girl!")
5. Do not tolerate stereotyping or sexist put-downs, jokes, or comments from students or adults.
6. Avoid ridicule, teasing, humor or sarcasm that is gender-based and stereotypical (e.g., "Primping all the time, Mary, that's just like a girl!" "John, you clumsy ox, you spilled my coffee!")
7. Avoid tearing down womanhood as a model (e.g., "He was as weak as a woman." "He throws a ball like a girl.")
8. Avoid behavior that assumes limitations in an individual based on her or his sex (e.g., the assumptions that young women are not good at auto mechanics or that boys can not cook, leading to excessive or inappropriate levels of "help" that send messages about expected inadequacies. Offer support and encouragement, but avoid "doing for."
9. Avoid display materials that convey negative or stereotyped messages.
10. Avoid recommending a career, or engaging in career counseling, based on sex-role stereotyping. Every student should be encouraged to explore all possible career options.

11. Avoid sex-stereotyped or sex-biased language (e.g., using "he" and "man" as generic for all humans. Studies show that "man" and "he" are heard as "male," as when a teacher talks about the "historical contributions of man.")

12. Be alert to stereotypical references to males and females in books and other teaching materials. If it is not possible to switch to sex-fair materials, point out the stereotypes and encourage students to discuss the issues.

13. Never criticize a student in front of others. Criticism should be offered in private and given in a constructive manner.

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

What about specific classroom activities or exercises to address the problems of stereotyping and sex-bias and to promote self-esteem among young women?

It is very important to incorporate activities that promote self-esteem into the student's educational experience and to see them as an integral part of that experience. To the extent that self-esteem is promoted, these activities should enhance learning, raise consciousness, and open options in the student's life, allowing the whole person to develop without artifical limitations.

The following suggested activities are designed to enhance self-esteem among girls and young women. It is anticipated that all students will derive benefit from participating in these activities. The activities involve boys and girls and promote self-esteem in both, or at least help prevent behavior that lowers self-esteem in the opposite sex. Any activity could be done as a single-sex activity where that may be appropriate for a particular class.

Some of the methods and activities useful for promoting self-esteem in girls and young women can also be effective in promoting self-esteem in boys and young men. Effective strategies for promoting self-esteem in minority males may be complicated by issues involving racism. Certainly, it is important to note that minority girls are in an especially vulnerable position since they bear the double burden of racism and sexism.

Each activity will indicate the purpose or goal of that activity and the appropriate grade levels suggested for that exercise (E = Elementary School, J = Junior High/ Middle School, S = Senior High School).

WALL MURAL: WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (E)

Purpose: To enhance the student's connections with women of the past and present, to discover female role models, and to raise consciousness about the work and contributions of women.

During Women's History Month, in March, attach a long sheet of paper (or several pieces taped together) to the wall. Have students contribute information on notable American women of all races to the mural by:

1. Drawing a picture of a famous woman active at her work.

2. Pasting a picture of a woman active at her work.
3. Writing a brief statement on women, complete with a fancy border.
4. Writing the name of a notable woman with dates and title or contribution in fancy lettering.

Encourage students to use information on historical and contemporary women, including women they personally know. Consider gathering a small collection of picture books on notable women for display in class to provide examples of names. Ask students to get names of famous women or notable women in their lives from their families.

PATTING MY OWN BACK (E)

Purpose: To help students recognize their own unique individuality, to understand how classifying people as members of groups hides that individuality, and to develop self-presentation skills.

Discuss the fact that we should all be proud of ourselves as unique individuals. Ask students to discuss the idea of people as unique. Encourage them to think about ways that uniqueness fails to get appreciated and the kinds of things that get in the way of seeing people as their own special person (e.g., a person's race — "He's a black man," or a person's sex — "She's just a girl," or a person's age — "They're old people," or a person's health — "He's handicapped.")

Stress how important it is that students continually focus on their own special individuality and affirm that uniqueness. Tell the students that they will all get the opportunity to "pat their own backs." Then have each student, in turn, pat herself or himself on the back followed by the statement "I'm special because ..." Reinforce all statements with affirmations. If any students cannot think of why they are special, offer encouragement and say that we often do not give ourselves enough credit for being special. If the child continues to have difficulty (a sign of low self-esteem), ask the class to help out with positive suggestions of how they see him or her as special. Stress that only positive comments are acceptable in this activity.

DISCOVERY (E)

[Variation of an exercise in *100 Ways to Enhance Self-Concept in the Classroom*]

Purpose: To affirm each child's individuality and specialness.

Just before this exercise, hang a mirror in a closet or out in the hall, being sure that no one knows you have done so.
Seat the class in a circle.

Ask each student, in turn, to name "the most special person you know about." As names are given, write them on the blackboard. After all the names have been given, tell the students there is a place where they can find out who is the most special person of all. Each child is cautioned not to tell the answer until everyone has had a chance to look. Have each child, in turn, go to where the mirror is hung.

After all students have returned to the circle, ask, "Who is the most special person of all?" After they have all answered "I am," ask how it is possible for everyone to be the most special person. In their answers, stress the concepts of individuality and uniqueness. Now turn to the original list on the board and affirm that they too are all special people.

SHOW AND TELL (E)

Purpose: To highlight the things we are all proud of as individuals and to develop self-presentation skills.

Seat youngsters in a circle.

Tell students that today they will show and tell themselves. Ask girls and boys to think about the best things about themselves. Tell them they will show and tell their best to the rest of the class. Have each student stand in the center of the circle when making his or her presentation.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO ME (E)

Purpose: To help students appreciate the individual differences between people and the diversity of values they hold and to help them understand that difference is healthy.

Have each student think about three things that are important to him or her. Have students form a circle and go around the room, sharing their three important things. After everyone is finished, ask the students what they have learned from sharing and listening to everyone's important things.

PICTURE WISHES (E)

Purpose: To enable girls and boys to envision options for their future careers while alerting them to sex-role stereotyping as a limitation.

Have students draw a picture of themselves when they are grown up, showing what job they would like to have. Before they begin to draw, spend some time talking about the importance of thinking about all kinds of careers. Introduce them to the basic concept of sex-role stereotyping in jobs. Ask them to discuss what's wrong with sex-role stereotyping in jobs. When the picture is complete, each should write on it, "I want to be _____ because _____."

ALENA'S MAGIC JAR (E)

Purpose: To focus on what troubles girls about being girls and boys about being boys (if anything), to heighten awareness of the fact that change requires hard work, to caution against passivity, to instill a sense of power and options, and to make boys more sensitive to the difficulties involved in being a girl and girls more sensitive to the difficulties involved in being a boy.

Take an ordinary jar or vase. Seat girls and boys in two circles, girls in the inner circle and boys in the outer circle. Ask the boys to listen carefully.

Say to the girls: "Let's pretend this is Alena's magic jar (Alena is Aladdin's sister). Each of you has one wish to change something about being a girl that you don't like. Simply rub the jar and make your wish out loud." Give students a chance to think about their wishes. Pass Alena's magic jar around the circle, giving each girl the opportunity to make a wish. Note that it is certainly acceptable if someone says she does not wish to change anything.

After the girls have finished, draw out the implications of the wishes for change by putting questions to the whole group. Encourage students to discuss various ways that change may be possible, emphasizing the importance of being active in life rather than a passive "victim." Stress that change comes only when people are willing to work for what they believe, using the example of the suffragists who worked for seventy-two years to win the right to vote for women.

Now reverse the circles, with boys in the inner circle and girls in the outer circle. Ask the girls to listen quietly. Follow the instructions above, changing references from girls into boys.

After every boy has had a chance to make a wish, have the same discussion as above with the whole group again, this time focusing on the boys. After that is complete, add a discussion on the different wishes of the girls and boys and ask if they think boys and girls should be treated differently.

ADVERTISING ME (E,J)

Purpose: To heighten awareness of each person's individuality and to enhance self-presentation skills.

Have students produce a commercial for themselves. As a self-enhancing activity, ask students to select a medium to advertise themselves, that is, their strengths, skills, and talents. Possible mediums include a newspaper or magazine ad, a TV ad, a poster, a radio announcement, or a brochure. The object is to "promote" themselves.

IF I WERE ... (E,J)

Purpose: To raise consciousness about how sex differences and sex-roles work in our lives.

Have the class sit in a circle. Distribute blank sheets of paper (8½ x 11) to each person.

Ask the girls to write on the paper with a felt pen IF I WERE A BOY ...
Ask the boys to write on the paper with a felt pen IF I WERE A GIRL ...

Then ask everyone to complete the sentence however they wish. After everyone is finished, go around the room and have each student show her or his sentence while others are encouraged to react to the sentence. A valuable exchange will likely occur that gets youngsters to focus and comment on sex-role differences, limitations, options, etc. After the exchange, ask students WHY being a young man or young women makes a difference and whether it should be that way.

WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS (E,J,S)

Purpose: To build a sense of power and competency in young women who will see that women have worked successfully in all areas, to provide women role models, to open career options for young women, and to engender in both young men and women respect for women and their accomplishments.

In all disciplines, be sure to include the contributions of women to the particular field being studied (math, chemistry, music, biology, art, etc.), just as the contributions of men are routinely noted. A growing body of women's studies research now exists in virtually all fields that can be found in most large libraries.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY (E,J,S)

Purpose: To increase options for young women through models, to build connections with women's history, and to recognize power and competency as a part of women's heritage.

Celebrate or call attention to the birthdays of prominent women in American history, just as the birthdays of our historical "fathers" are celebrated. Be sure to include women of all races.

Plan an academic discussion to coincide with a particular woman's birthday (e.g., Harriet Tubman-slavery, Sally Ride-the exploration of space, Elizabeth Cady Stanton-the suffrage movement).

THE GREATEST WOMAN AND GREATEST MAN I KNOW (E,J,S)

Purpose: To help students recognize that people of both sexes can be great for a variety of individual reasons.

Ask each student to identify the greatest woman and the greatest man they know (or have known) and to think about why that person is great. Tell students to come prepared to share that information with the class.

Seat the class in a circle. Go around the room, have the students share the identity of their great women, with the reasons for their greatness. Encourage students to discuss and ask questions. Then go around the room again and do the same thing with their great men. After the sharing, ask students to discuss what they have learned about greatness.

CELEBRATIONS (E,J,S)

Purpose: To help low self-esteem students overcome their tendency to discount their achievements, to help everyone focus on their successes, and to develop self-presentation skills.

Encourage students to celebrate their successes, however small, in one of two ways:

1. By sharing their successes with the rest of their class at a brief time especially set aside for that purpose each week (possibly use "dead" time, such as the few minutes in the morning of homeroom while waiting for the bell).
2. By giving oneself a personal "reward," such as a flower, a soda with a friend, etc.

SHARING MY PRIDE (E,J,S)

Purpose: To overcome the sense instilled in young people, especially girls, that it is wrong and boastful to praise oneself and to develop self-presentation skills.

Discuss with students the fact that we all do things we can be proud of. Talk about the importance of giving ourselves credit for what we do and sharing that pride in appropriate ways with others.

Set aside a special bulletin board or wall space for posting representations of individual accomplishments (e.g., a photo of a girl scout award being given, a piece of school work, a work of art, a newspaper clipping about a sports event, an announcement of a special honor, etc.).

Carefully distinguish the difference between (1) arrogant boasting, (2) legitimate pride in one's accomplishments, and (3) self-promotion, which is considered necessary to success. Have students discuss the ways society discourages (2) and (3), both of which are healthy and essential for self-esteem. Note that (2) and (3) are especially discouraged in girls and women, who are often taught to be "modest" and to wait passively for recognition.

Encourage all students to share their pride in their accomplishments, however "small" they may seem. Ask them to especially focus on their skills, talents, and hard work in contributing items to the board. Be sure every student participates. In cases where a student seems unable to come up with accomplishments (a sign of low self-esteem), point out the accomplishments and growth you see in that person.

STUDENT OF THE WEEK (E,J,S)

Purpose: To promote the sense that every individual is different, important, and worthy of recognition.

Conduct random drawings of student names every week, ensuring that each name is drawn once. The student whose name is drawn becomes the student of the week.

After the first name is drawn, spend one week preparing items to highlight and honor that student. Involve the whole class in the process of gathering or producing

information and items (i.e., photos, awards, paragraphs about the student, poems to and about the student, interests, etc.). Be sure the student of the week is also involved in the process and shares information about himself or herself. All items should be put on a special bulletin board or poster board and kept on display for the second week.

Be sure that displays of girls and boys portray the *whole* person. Avoid emphasis on sex role stereotypes (i.e., do not stress only the attractiveness and fashion consciousness of young women or only the sports skill of young men). Emphasize this holistic approach and its importance to the class. Consider assigning two students to oversee the project and ensure a balanced collection.

SELF-AFFIRMATION (E,J,S)

Purpose: To encourage self-affirmation at times when self-esteem is being undermined.

After an introduction to sexist communication and how it undermines people, especially girls and women, introduce the following strategy:

When people use degrogatory, sexist language (ex., "dumb blond," "chick," "air head," "just like a girl,") that may undermine your self-esteem, say the following to yourself several times, "Whatever people say about women, I am a worthy person!" (For men, minorities or handicapped people, re-word the strategy and statement.)

GUIDED FANTASY (E,J,S)

Purpose: To help young women and men create self-generated models of future career options and to stress the importance of overcoming limits to future options.

Ask students to get as comfortable as they can in their chairs. Explain that you will lead them through a fantasy about their futures. Encourage them to let their imaginations run free. As they relax, give the following instructions, pausing after each:

1. Close your eyes. Relax.
2. Imagine that you are making a movie about your future. You are the writer, director, and star. You can be *anything*; there are *no limits* in your future. Money, background, gender, and the like are not factors.
3. Picture the most successful future you can imagine for yourself. What position will you hold? Enjoy the image.
4. What do you like best about your position or career? What special talents or skills did you bring to this position that made you successful?
5. Picture yourself working in your future position. Enjoy the image.
6. Open your eyes.

Ask for volunteers to share their scripts about their future positions and careers with the class. Discuss the importance of keeping all options open in choosing a career despite the limiting expectations of others.

CAREER BULLETIN BOARD (E,J,S)

Purpose: To expand career options for young women and men.

Establish a career bulletin board in class. Display pictures of both sexes in a wide variety of jobs and careers. Be careful to include men and women in career roles non-traditional for their sex (e.g., male nurse, male secretary, male child care worker, female doctor, female farmer, female electrician).

NON-TRADITIONAL CAREER BULLETIN BOARD (E,J,S)

Purpose: To focus attention on non-traditional careers and to expand career options for young men and women.

Establish a Non-traditional Career Bulletin Board. Display only pictures of women and men engaged in jobs and careers non-traditional for their sex. Have a class discussion about the importance of considering non-traditional jobs and careers.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PERSON (E,J,S)

Purpose: To stress the importance of judging how people look (including ourselves) on an individual basis, not as conforming to a single, artificial standard.

Mount a series of six or seven large pictures of women's faces of different ages and races, cut from magazines. Be sure to include a child, a "gorgeous" model type, a middle-aged woman, and an old woman.

Set the pictures in a row in front of the class. Ask "Who is the most beautiful person?" Have all students respond on a ballot. Count the votes and announce the results.

Have students discuss WHY they voted as they did, i.e., what was the standard they were using. Be prepared to address the concept of "applying a standard," which we do all the time without attending to the fact. Ask students if they think it is fair to judge everyone by one standard of beauty. Is it fair to judge blacks by a white standard, the elderly by a standard of youth, etc? Encourage students to come up with a standard or standards of beauty that would allow for individual features, ages, races, etc. to be valued.

FIELD TRIP (E,J,S)

Purpose: To build connections with a part of women's history.

Arrange a field trip to the National Women's Rights Historic Park in Seneca Falls, New York. Students will be able to visit the site of the world's first Women's Rights Convention in 1848; the home of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a pioneer in the struggle for women's rights; the church where Alice Paul introduced the first Equal Rights Ammendment in 1923, and the National Women's Hall of Fame. Telephone the National Park Service at (315) 568-2991 for information.

CHOICES AND CHALLENGES (J)

CHOICES:

Purpose: To heighten self-awareness and promote personal planning for teen women.

Utilize, over time, the workbook, CHOICES, for young women, available from Girls Clubs of America, National Resource Center, 441 W. Michigan St., Indianapolis, Indiana 46202, telephone (317) 634-7546.

CHALLENGES:

Purpose: To heighten self-awareness and promote personal planning for teen men.

Utilize, over time, the workbook, CHALLENGES, for young men, available from Girls Clubs of America, same address as above.

GREAT WOMEN (J,S)

Purpose: To provide role models for young women, to convey that women have power, and to counter the bias of traditional history.

Explain that students often learn about the great men of history and that it is important to recognize that there are also many great women in our past. Ask students to research a woman of accomplishment and write an obituary for a newspaper of her day, praising her accomplishments.

Provide a list of names and, to insure that the same woman is not written about twice, have students draw names from a box.
Be sure women of all races are included. Have students read their obituaries in class.

Some suggested names:

Abigail Adams
Jane Addams
Catherine Beecher
Mary McLeod Bethune
Nellie Bly
Jacqueline Cochrane
Bessie Coleman
Zora Neale Hurston
Mary Jemison
Mother Jones
Sonya Kovalevskaya
Susan La Flesche
Emma Lazarus
Maria Mitchell
Lucretia Mott
Lucy Parsons
Jeannette Rankin
Wilma Rudolph
Florence Sabin
Sacajawea
Rose Schneiderman
Lucy Stone
Sojourner Truth
Harriet Tubman
Grace Yang
Babe Didrikson Zaharias

Variation: Ask students to consider the criteria of "greatness," to show that the criteria used may tend to exclude women i.e., position, status, fame, winning, quick acts of heroism most common in military functions, power, wealth, public work.

Use the example of Napoleon as a "great man" and ask what criteria make him great. Then ask students to consider how Napoleon might be viewed if the criteria centered around the consequences of his actions: hundreds of thousands dead or maimed and the peace of Europe disrupted for 15 years.

Ask students to redefine "greatness" by recognizing human diversity.

WOMEN IN WORLD CULTURES (J,S)

Purpose: To understand the roles and status of women worldwide and to build connections with women and their many cultures.

In the context of studying world cultures, be sure to include a unit on the roles and status of women through:

1. Lectures.
2. Research projects.
3. Group discussions.
4. Bulletin board displays of women in those cultures.

BEAUTY IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER (J,S)

Purpose: To increase awareness of the difference between an arbitrary, artificial standard of beauty that only very few can conform to and natural, varied beauty that respects individual differences.

Have each student bring to class two (2) pictures (cut from magazines, newspapers, or posters) one each of a "beautiful" woman and man. Tape pictures on the blackboard and use them as the basis of a discussion that touches on the following issues:

1. Conventional beauty based on a popularly accepted standard.
2. Individual beauty which is relative to real individuals with varied features and qualities.
3. Problems entailed in conforming to a conventional standard, including the question of whether it is possible physiologically for most people to conform.
4. Differences in standards for women and men (i.e., age, wrinkles, gray hair acceptable for men but not women, men do not "make themselves up" as much as women do).
5. Impact of a constant barrage of conventional images on our self-esteem.

COMPLIMENTS, COMPLIMENTS (J,S)

Purpose: To heighten awareness of stereotyping, to focus on the individuality of each person, and to practice self-affirmation.

Have students arrange their chairs in a circle.

Briefly discuss the importance of seeing every person as an individual. Then talk about stereotypes and our tendency to look at people as members of a group rather than as individuals. Use male/female and black/white stereotypes as examples. Encourage students to get involved in the discussion and use examples of their own.

Tell students that in this activity they will practice giving and receiving compliments. Explain that in this compliment-giving they should try to avoid stereotypes and focus on the individuality of the person being complimented.

Each person compliments the person to his or her right. The person being complimented then responds to the compliment in a comfortable, self-affirming way. Go around the circle until everyone has been complimented and has responded.

After the activity, ask students if any stereotypes were used. If so, point out how difficult it is to avoid stereotypes, even when we are trying to do so.

WHAT AM I SAYING TO MYSELF? (J,S)

Purpose: To alert students, especially young women, to a common way they erode their self-esteem or reinforce their low self-esteem.

Define negative self-talk and go over the forms of negative self-talk and self-minimization as follows:

Self-talk: How I talk TO myself (internal) and how I talk ABOUT myself (external).

Negative self-talk: Ways I put myself down or make things difficult for myself.

Forms of negative self-talk:

1. Catastrophes — I tell myself terrible things will happen IF I do X ("If I speak up, he'll never talk to me again." "When I talk in public, people think I'm stupid.")
2. Labels — I put labels on myself that put me down ("I sounded bossy just then." "I look ugly in this dress.")
3. Limits — I set limitations on my actions BEFORE I am in a position to do it ('I'll take part in class discussion only if I'm called on.')

Self-minimization: Language or behavior that trivializes or "makes small" my importance or my accomplishments (On getting a compliment from a teacher about my paper, I say, "I didn't think I had done such a good job." At an important meeting, I sit in the back and keep silent.)

Share with students the fact that research indicates that females engage in negative self-talk and self-minimization more frequently than males. Discuss why this might be.

Ask students to keep a log for several days in which they record examples of their own negative self-talk and self-minimization. At the end of the time, ask students what they learned.

STICKS AND STONES (J,S)

Purpose: To alert students to sexist language as a way of undermining people and to promote communication that addresses each person as an individual, not as a member of a group.

Ask the class to think about the old saying, "Sticks and stones can break my bones, but names can never hurt me." Invite students to react to that saying.

Use the saying and reactions to it as the basis of a discussion of the following:

1. Hurting the body versus hurting the mind.
2. The importance of naming and its function in designating WHAT a thing IS.
3. The power of language to uplift or undermine people (e.g., the difference between calling someone a "winner" or a "loser").
4. What happens when names are applied to groups and individuals are categorized as members of those groups (e.g., when a woman is called a "dumb blond" or a man is called a "sissy").

Lead into a discussion of sexist communication (i.e., communication that categorizes, differentiates, or labels people according to their sex when it is irrelevant or inappropriate). Show how naming is at the heart of sexist communication and often results in undermining the individual who is the object of its messages.

Encourage students to come up with examples of naming as sexist communication. Ask students how sexist naming can be avoided and eliminated.

BODY LANGUAGE (J,S)

Purpose: To introduce the concept of body language and its importance and to alert students to stereotypical body language which they may inadvertently be conveying, thereby minimizing the unique self.

Briefly discuss the concept of sex stereotypes and how we are constantly confronted with stereotypical images of men and women.

Then discuss the importance of body language in conveying messages about ourselves. Point out that most communication is not through words, but through body language. Have students list ways that the body conveys messages (eye contact, facial expression, tone of voice, posture, gestures, etc.).

Have all students stand in a circle in front of chairs. Ask them to focus on the most stereotypical man they can think of. Then have each assume the position (body language) of that stereotypical man and hold the position. Have them discuss the various stances and what messages are conveyed.

Now ask students to think about the most stereotypical woman they can think of. Then have each assume the position (body language) of that stereotypical woman and hold the position. Have them discuss the various stances and what messages are conveyed.

Ask what they learned from the exercise and how it applies to them.

THAT'S MY BAG (J,S)

Purpose: To assist young women and men in the process of values clarification, to focus on how girls and boys feel pressured to conform and be like everyone else, and to affirm the importance of individuality and self-esteem.

To ensure students rights of privacy, provide advance notice of this activity and do not require students to show others any items from their pockets or purses.

Break students into pairs, asking girls to bring their purses with them if they have one. Girls who do not carry purses and boys will likely carry items in a pocket. Have all students examine carefully the contents of their own purse or pocket. Ask students to discuss with their partners what these items reflect about their values (i.e., what each considers important).

Then have the whole group come together and ask for volunteers to share their discoveries. Look for common items (e.g., lots of cosmetics). Be non-judgmental, but ask students to analyze the "meaning" of these objects and their value. Where have these values come from? Were the values freely accepted or the result of societal, media, or peer pressure? How do these values enhance or diminish individuality? What items reflect a unique individuality? Are they pleased with what they discovered? Why?

Be sure to discuss how important individuality is to appreciation of the self as unique.

SUGGESTION BOX (J,S)

Purpose: To heighten awareness of how we treat members of the opposite sex, to get feedback on the opposite sex's feelings about that treatment, to raise consciousness about differential treatment based on sex, and to show how treatment based on a person's sex ignores individuality.

Prepare two boxes for use as suggestion boxes (with a slit in the top of each). Mark one box SUGGESTIONS FOR BOYS and the other SUGGESTIONS FOR GIRLS.

Have each boy write a suggestion for the girls in class that begins, "I wish you would treat boys ..." Instruct the boys to drop the suggestions into the box SUGGESTIONS FOR GIRLS.

Have each girl write a suggestion for the boys in class that begins, "I wish you would treat girls ..." Instruct the girls to drop the suggestions into the box SUGGESTIONS FOR BOYS.

Divide boys and girls into two (2) separate discussion groups. Have the boys review the suggestions they received from the girls, while the girls review the suggestions they received from the boys. After each group has discussed their responses, bring the whole class together to share what they learned from the exercise. Encourage boys and girls to focus on differential treatment based on a person's sex and how they feel about it. Use examples that emerge to stress that treatment based on a person's sex fails to account for individuality.

THE EQUAL SIGN (J,S)

Purpose: To heighten awareness of how females are diminished as people by stereotypical language and behavior and to develop strategies to cope with such language and behavior.

Draw a large equal sign (=) on an 8½ x 11 sheet of paper. Make enough copies for every student in the class.

Discuss with students the following:

1. Historically, women were once thought to be inferior human beings (draw an analogy with the fact that blacks were once thought to be natural slaves).
2. Stereotypes label people and make it hard for us to see them as fully capable human beings.
3. Certain language and behavior patterns diminish groups of people so that we don't see them as equal to other human beings.
4. The first step in change is recognizing the language and behavior that diminishes people.

Encourage students to come up with concrete examples of language and behavior that diminishes groups of people, focusing on women (e.g., "You're acting like a sissy!", "Girls can't do that!", "Jim, you're crying just like a girl. Stop it!", "That was a good shot for a girl!", a book title such as *The History of Man*, the fact that male sports are considered more important than female sports, the fact that many people will not vote for a woman for president of the country.)

Give each student an Equal Sign. Ask them to carry it in their purse or pocket for a specified period (2 days, 1 week, etc.). Instruct students to rip a piece off the sign every time they hear language, or observe behavior, that diminishes females in any way. At the end of the specified period, have students report to the class what they learned and show the condition of their sign (if any remains). Ask students what they can do to deal positively with this situation.

MAKING POINTS (J,S)

Purpose: To focus on limitations young women impose on themselves and to raise consciousness about sex-role stereotyping as a factor decreasing options.

Show the film, *Making Points*, in class or during an auditorium gathering of the whole school. *Making Points* is a cleverly done interview with adolescent boys and girls about life and career choices that involves sex role-reversal. The boys give responses typical of girls, providing "shock" value in heightening awareness. (Color, 11 minutes, 16 mm or video, Direct Cinema Limited or available from Project VOICE, Regional Planning Center, 47 Cornell Road, Latham, New York 12110, (518) 786-3211.)

Be sure to follow the showing with small group discussions to highlight major points and to allow students to apply these points to their own lives.

CAREER DAY (J,S)

Purpose: To expand future career options for young men and women.

Hold a Career Day at your school that stresses non-traditional career options for women and men. Allow everyone to consider careers non-traditional for their sex which they would ordinarily not consider. Cooperation with a local BOCES or community college is often fruitful. Such a Career Day should include some or all of the following:

1. Role models from the community working in jobs and careers non-traditional for their sex in small group workshops/discussions (e.g., woman doctor, engineer, carpenter, electrician, police officer; male nurse, child care worker, secretary).
2. Lab workshops for young women in non-traditional areas, such as computers, physics, chemistry, auto mechanics graphics, and architectural design.
3. Lab workshops for young men in non-traditional areas such as nursing, secretarial, cosmetology, child care, home economics.
4. Keynote speaker addressing the importance of expanding career options.
5. Available pamphlets and other materials on non-traditional careers.
6. Appropriate movies or videos aimed at eliminating sex- role stereotyping in careers or expanding career options. Consult Project VOICE for its media list, Regional Planning Center, 47 Cornell Road, Latham, New York 12110, telephone (518) 786-3211.
7. Math presented as a crucial factor in expanding career options.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN (J,S)

Purpose: To have students create a non-traditional role-model and to develop skills in dealing with sex-role biases.

Have students plan and organize the campaign strategy for the first woman to be elected President of the United States. Have students select a prominent woman candidate in politics or other field.

Divide the class into small groups, each with a task. For example, different groups might plan and organize fund-raising, advertising and public relations, or public events and speeches.

After small group meetings, each group reports back to the full class to inform and coordinate. Each group should execute at least one example of their work (e.g., host a fund-raising reception to solicit pledges, produce a newspaper ad, put on a speaking engagement with the "candidate" addressing a specific audience such as auto workers.) In each instance, the groups will have to determine strategies for overcoming biases against a woman becoming president.

DEPENDENCE OR INDEPENDENCE (J,S)

Purpose: To help young men and women discover for themselves the pitfalls of financial dependence, to focus on differing expectations of boys and girls about future financial independence, to alert young women to the pitfalls of financial dependence, and to encourage the choice of financial independence as a source of power and future options.

Introduce the concepts of financial dependence and financial independence by writing a definition of each on the blackboard.

Financial dependence means having to rely on another person or agency for life's necessities (food, clothing, shelter, etc.).

Financial independence means having enough money of one's own to take care of all of life's necessities.

Divide the class into two groups. Ask each group to appoint a recorder to take down group responses (use worksheets, one titled financial independence, the other financial dependence, each with two columns: benefits and hazards). Assign the following task to each group:

Group 1: Discuss the benefits of financial dependence; such as, why would anyone choose to be financially dependent? Then discuss the hazards of financial dependence; such as, why would anyone not want to be financially dependent?

Group 2: Discuss the benefits of financial independence; such as why would anyone choose to be financially independent? Then discuss the hazards of financial independence; such as, why would anyone not want to be financially independent?

Set an appropriate time limit. Bring the full class back together to talk about what they discovered. Ask students how the exercise applies to women and men. Point out that young men and women are often raised with different expectations about financial independence and have students discuss those differences. Encourage students to apply what they learned to their own lives, being sure that they do not leave the choice of dependence or independence to chance. Link financial independence to careful career planning and choice.

WHAT I WANT OUT OF LIFE (J,S)

Purpose: To provide a realistic picture of the costs of what people want in life, to reinforce the importance of financial independence, especially in young women who often think they will be "taken care of" by a man, to link career choice and commitment to financial ability to pay, and to demonstrate the basis for building power in controlling their own lives.

Prepare a two-page worksheet with the following written on it: WHAT I WANT OUT OF LIFE: WILL I HAVE THE MONEY?

Break into pairs as directed.

Part I. Discuss with your partner what you want out of life, considering your whole life in the future. Talk about items you would like to purchase, such as, a car, stereo and house, as well as things that will affect the quality of your life, but are not purchased in a store, such as travel and continuing education.

As you come up with things you want out of life, list your own things in the first column below:

"WHAT I WANT OUT OF LIFE"	"HOW MUCH WILL IT COST"

Part II. Now go back to the second column and estimate what each item will cost.

Part III. (On page 2) After your prices are all listed, ask yourself HOW you will pay for these things.

Distribute worksheets entitled, "HOW WILL I HAVE THE MONEY?" to everyone. Have the class break into pairs and proceed with the worksheet exercise. Tell students you are available to answer questions, especially in Part II, relative to costs.

After everyone has completed the worksheets, bring them back to the full group. Ask students what they have learned from the exercise. Be sure they have been realistic in the costs assigned to their "things." Discuss the importance of career choice and career commitment to availability of enough money to do what they want in life.

If anyone indicates that a man/husband is seen as the means to paying the costs of what they want, ask them to think about the perils of that approach (low income in one-wage-earner families, separation, divorce, widowhood, single parenthood, no marriage "in the cards," etc.). If this issue does not come up, be sure to lead into it. Ask students to discuss how important it is to control their own lives. Ask how they would feel always being dependent upon another person for money to buy what they want.

THE CHANGING FAMILY (J,S)

Purpose: To help students achieve a realistic view of the changing family, to help students recognize that there is nothing wrong with them if they belong to a non-traditional family type, and to help girls understand the importance of being able to be self-sufficient financially.

Prepare a confidential survey on the family for members of the class as follows:

I. Check the answer which best describes your family type:

- ☐ Live with biological mother and father.
- ☐ Live with adoptive mother and father.
- ☐ Live with mother and father, with one parent being a step-parent.
- ☐ Live with mother.
- ☐ Live with father.
- ☐ Live with relative or relatives other than mother and father.
- ☐ Live with non-related guardian or guardians.
- ☐ Other.

II. How many brothers and sisters live with you?

Before handing out the questionnaire, stress that the answers will be anonymous and that no one should sign their name. While students are filling in the questionnaire, replicate the questionnaire items on the board. Have students drop the completed surveys into a box to ensure anonymity.

Review the completed questionnaires and put an X on the board in front of each item for which someone gave an answer. To avoid students "measuring" them-

selves against the majority, do not indicate the number of responses for each item. For part II, list the numbers of brothers and sisters, again being careful not to indicate how many said 0, 1, 2, etc.

Ask students if they are surprised at the results. Does the variety fit their expectations based on what they see in the mass media? Discuss the variety of family types in the class in the context of the changing family in America.

Discuss divorce and its prevalence (nearly, one out of two marriages ends in divorce, according to the National Center for Health Statistics). Talk about what divorce means for various members of the family and the different problems for mother/father/children that result. Talk about the prevalence of teen pregnancy and the phenomenon of young women alone keeping their children.

Encourage an open discussion of student concerns and fears that center around the family. Be sure to talk about the Prince Charming myth and the need for young women to prepare for financial independence in the same way that boys do.

ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING (J,S)

Purpose: To develop self-affirming and self-respecting behavior in girls to compliment respect for others.

Offer assertiveness training (provided by a professional trainer) for young women. Given the conditioning to passivity that most girls experience growing up, assertiveness training is very helpful in building self-confidence. Training might be offered as an extra-curricular activity or as part of Human Development courses. In any case, incentives should be used to encourage participation and young women should be educated as to the need and benefits.

MATH AVIODANCE / ANXIETY WORKSHOP (J,S)

Purpose: To overcome sex-role conditioning and sex-biased treatment of young women that results in math avoidance/anxiety, to impress on young women that math anxiety is not a biological flaw in them but an acquired problem, to demonstrate that many careers require a math background and hence, that math avoidance limits a person's future choices, and to expand career options for girls.

To address the low self-confidence women and minorities often experience in math performance, hold a Math Avoidance/Anxiety Workshop for students offered by a trainer specializing in this area. Incentives to attend may have to be provided. Consider offering such a workshop as part of class requirements in math or a related subject.

WOMEN IN MY TREE (S)

Purpose: To raise consciousness about the work of women, to promote respect for women as individuals, to build students' connections with women in their past, to enhance the student's sense of his or her past, and to build the student's sense of her or his unique individuality through personal roots.

Assign an oral history research project: Have students research the female ancestors in their families by interviewing parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, elderly family friends, etc. Be sensitive to students who may not be living with their biological parents and offer other options such as researching the family with whom they live.

Introduce students to the concept of oral history. Go over oral history interview techniques:

1. Assist students with the sorts of questions to ask and urge them to prepare these questions before the interview.
2. Have students arrange a mutually convenient time and place for the interview away from distractions.
3. Have students take notes on cards, citing the speaker source and their relationship to the speaker.
4. Have students ask to see available photos and memorabilia of the ancestor and examine these for clues about the person.

Have students prepare a family tree going as far back as they can. On a separate sheet attached to the tree, have students summarize their discoveries on women in their tree by writing brief vignettes on each. If possible, have students include photographs of the relevant people depicted.

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING (S)

Purpose: To demonstrate that many young women and young men have similar concerns, to enable young women and young men to get their concerns out in the open, to provide support for young women and young men in their concerns for the future, and to build connections between women and men.

Consciousness-raising sessions may be most effective when conducted in single sex groups, at least in the beginning. Single sex groups tend to speak more openly and to engage in less "posturing" for the other sex. This activity, therefore, should be conducted for all-female and all-male groups.

Have students arrange their chairs in a circle. If the group is very large, break into two or three circles. Tell students they will function as a support group, being careful to respect each person's right to a viewpoint. Respecting that right does not mean agreeing with the other person's view. All interaction must be supportive and constructive.

Ask students to share their concerns about the future. Encourage everyone to participate and stress that they should feel free to discuss anything on their minds. All students are encouraged to interact. Let the discussion flow freely.

PRINCE CHARMING (S)

Purpose: To heighten awareness about images of fantasy presented to young women and young men as reality, to focus on a false view of men as Prince Charmings, to redirect girls' attention to reality, and to counter the limitations on young women and men entailed in the Prince Charming myth.

Have a discussion on popular culture as found in the mass media (movies, videos, rock music, television, radio, etc.). Focus on the difference between fantasy and reality and ask if students believe the two are clearly separate in the mass media. Discuss HOW the mass media present fantasy as though it were reality.

Use "romance" and "Prince Charming" (found in many forms) as a case in point. Have students supply examples of romance and Prince Charming as they appear in movies, television, magazines, and popular music. Ask students if popular images of romance and Prince Charming are fantasy or reality. Tell students they will have a chance to analyze this question for themselves.

Assign a "soap opera" for students to analyze on television over a period of two to three weeks. Summaries of the story lines can be found in many newspapers. Ask students to look for, and make a list of:

1. Recurring images of romance and Prince Charming.
2. Examples of fantasy presented as reality.

After the students' lists are finished, students should conclude the exercise with a paragraph summarizing how repeated images of romance and Prince Charming affect the lives of young women and young men. Have everyone share their discoveries and indicate what they learned from the exercise. Ask if the Prince Charming image is fair to men and what kinds of burdens the image imposes on men. Have students specify exactly how women are hurt by the Prince Charming myth.

After student comments, share the results of numerous studies of high school girls which reveal that approximately 95 percent believe that a Prince Charming will take care of them for the rest of their lives and that having a career (i.e., earning one's own money) is optional for women. Then talk about the reality of divorce (nearly 1 out of 2 marriages end in divorce, according to the National Center for Health Statistics) and poverty (2 out of 3 poor adults are women). End the discussion by asking students if they can afford Prince Charming fantasies.

MY JOURNAL (S)

Purpose: To heighten awareness of how gender operates in our lives and to provide the basis for increasing the level of control or power women and men exercise over their own lives.

Discuss with students the importance of gender in our lives. Talk about how crucial it is to reflect on what happens to us and what we do as it relates to gender. Encourage the students to talk about concrete examples of how gender is a factor in our lives. For example, discuss the expectations of others, career choices, leadership in society, wage differentials, and social constraints based on gender.

Ask students to keep a journal during a specified period of time (a week, a month, a semester, etc.). In this journal, students will record their reflections on how gender (the fact that they are women or men) affects their daily lives. Ask students to focus on how gender affects the power or control they exercise over their own lives.

Tell students how the journal will fit their course work (extra credit, part of their grade, etc.).

WHAT AM I SAYING? (S)

Purpose: To heighten awareness about sexist communication and how it works and to alert students to its damaging effects, especially on girls and women.

Introduce the concepts of denotation and connotation (denotation is the direct, explicit meaning of a term; connotation is the implicit or suggested meaning of a term).

Relate denotation and connotation to sexist communication, using as examples the words "bachelor" and "old maid" or "spinster."

Denotation: bachelor — an unmarried male
old maid — an unmarried female
Connotation: bachelor — free, having fun, sought after by women
old maid — unwanted, unfulfilled, undesirable to men

Ask students to discuss the assumptions about men and women that underlie the differing connotations of words like "bachelor" and "old maid." Ask if the assumptions are valid. Discuss how sexist communication works in subtle ways to undermine individual self-esteem, especially in girls and women.

After the discussion, have students break into small groups. Each group should appoint a recorder to list what the group says. Ask the groups to come up with examples of words or phrases that are explicitly or implicitly sexist.

Then bring the full group together and list the words and phrases on the board, encouraging discussion of the assumptions about women and men underlying the words and the damaging effects of such words.

THE WHOLE PERSON DISCUSSION (S)

Purpose: To stress the importance of both males and females developing their full potential as "whole people" and to enable both females and males to understand the need to develop skills and options.

Have a class discussion of androgyny. As preparation, assign students the task of looking up the word "androgyny" and writing out the definition for class.

After students have shared their definitions of androgyny, discuss the concept and its importance to developing the "whole person." Contrast the androgynous person with the sex-typed person, individuals who have and typically exhibit qualities and behaviors traditionally "appropriate" for their sex.

Talk about the difficulties the sex-typed person has in being a "whole person." Point out that several studies indicate that androgynous individuals have higher self-esteem than sex-typed individuals. Throughout the discussion, encourage students to take part and provide examples from their own experiences.

THE WOMAN AND MAN OF THE FUTURE (S)

Purpose: To enable students to envision women and men free of gender and sex limitations and to open options for both sexes by envisioning self-created models.

Divide the class into two groups, being sure that each group has both boys and girls. Ask each group to arrange their chairs in a circle. Provide each group with a work-sheet and ask each to appoint a recorder to list the group's responses. Assign one group "The Man of the Future" and assign the other group "The Woman of the Future."

Ask students to envision a future where gender/sex lines are effaced and people work and contribute to society based on their individual talents and skills (anything goes). Assign group 1 to brainstorm non-traditional things the "man of the future" will be doing in this new society. Assign group 2 to brainstorm non-traditional things the "woman of the future" will be doing in this new society. Brainstorming involves rapid listing of all ideas that come to mind without evaluation or comment by others.

Then have everyone return to the full group. Let each group share their ideas as the teacher writes their responses on the blackboard using two lists, "Man" and "Woman." Be prepared for unusual answers such as "the man of the future will have babies" and use those responses to raise relevant questions; e.g., How would men having babies affect women, men and society? Ask students what they have learned as a result of this activity.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE (S)

Purpose: To counter the conditioning to passivity, especially prevalent in young women, and to develop in students a sense of power and control over their lives.

Prepare two separate worksheets entitled, "Short-Term Planning" and "Long-Term Planning," as follows:

Short-Term Planning: (Space questions to allow for answers.)
What do I want to accomplish for myself in the next two years?
How will I do this (list specific strategies)?

Signed _____ Date _____

Long-Term Planning: (Space questions to allow for answers.)
What do I want to accomplish for myself in five years?
How will I do this (list specific strategies)?
What do I want to accomplish for myself in ten years?
How will I do this (list specific strategies)?

Signed _____ Date _____

Before distributing the planning sheets, discuss the importance of planning in all our lives. Point out the difference between passively reacting to circumstances and being proactive, such as, setting one's own agenda and vigorously pursuing it. Ask the students to supply examples of the difference between reaction and proaction.

Talk about the fact that historically girls and women have had problems with lack of planning in their lives, in part because somebody else was expected to take care of them ('Prince Charming'). Discuss the consequences for women for lack of planning and passivity, such as poverty: (two-thirds of all poor adults are women), high rates of teen pregnancy, lack of career advancement, etc. Stress the importance of follow-through, without which plans are merely pieces of paper.

Introduce the concepts of short-term planning and long-term planning. Point out that no plans are ever completely final, but that plans can change based on personal growth and circumstances. Tell students they will practice short- and long-term planning. Distribute both sheets, have students work on short-term planning first, then long-term planning.

WOMEN AND MONEY (S)

Purpose: To alert students to the subtle pressures on young women to be indifferent to money as it relates to their present and future well-being.

Prepare a worksheet entitled WOMEN AND MONEY on which you type the following:

"Consider the following: Women have special problems with money because of the way they were brought up and because of society's attitudes toward women.

Think about the special problems that women have with money due to upbringing and social attitudes about women. Discuss these problems together. Prepare a list of the responses of the group as they are given."

Divide the class into small groups. Ask each group to appoint a recorder. Distribute the worksheets and ask students to consider the issue carefully and record their responses. Set an appropriate time limit. After everyone has finished, bring the full group together to discuss the findings of each group.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING (S)

Purpose: To develop leadership skills in young women, thereby enhancing power and options.

Offer leadership training (provided by a professional trainer) to counter the prevalent assumption that men make good leaders but women do not, and to develop appropriate skills in girls.

If funding cannot be found in-house, consider the following:

1. Write a small grant to a local foundation.
2. Approach the Junior League for funding and/or trainers.
3. Work with your local community college or university to develop a joint program and/or grant.

EVALUATION

Having students keep a journal to record what they have learned, reaffirmed or were suprised to find out from each of the activities experienced can provide a cumulative record of who she or he is, how they see themselves and how others see them. By explicitly stating this information in a journal, this information is less likely to be overlooked or ignored and will expand the students self-concept by providing a record of the unique response of each student to the activities. If student journals are to be collected and reviewed by the teacher, care should be taken to inform students so that they can exclude any particular entry or part of that entry from teacher review.

If a formal pre-test/post-test evaluation of the classroom activities used to enhance student self-esteem is desired, the following widely accepted test should be considered: Cooper-Smith Self-Esteem Inventories; Consulting Psychology Press, 577 College Avenue, Palo Alto, California 94306, telephone (415) 857-1444.

Additional self-concept tests for consideration include: Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (The Way I Feel About Myself); Western Psychological Services, 1984 and Joseph Pre-School Primary Self-Concept Screen Test; Stoelting Company, 1979.

RESOURCES

Equity Assistance Center, New York University, 32 Washington Place, Suite 72, New York, New York 10003, (212) 998-5113. Print and media resources, regional training and technical assistance center.

Division of Civil Rights and Intercultural Relations, New York State Education Department, Albany, New York 12234, (518) 474-3934. Training and technical assistance on sex and race equity topics.

National Humanistic Education Center, Upper Jay, New York 12897. Seminars in humanistic education and values clarification and reprints of books and articles.

National Women's Hall of Fame, P.O. Box 335, Seneca Falls, New York 13148, (315) 568-2936. Museum displays honor women and their contributions, catalog of resources.

National Women's History Project, Box 3716, Santa Rosa, California 95402, (707) 526-5974. Ideas for celebrating National Women's History Month in March, catalog of resources.

New Futures Enterprises, Gender Equity Consultants, 4502 Broad Road, Syracuse, New York 13215, Dr. Rosemary Agonito, (315) 469-3902. Training and consulting on sex equity issues.

Project VOICE (Vocational Options in Creating Equality), Regional Planning Center, 47 Cornell Road, Latham, New York 12110, (518) 786-3211. Print and media resources, training and technical assistance project.

Women's Rights National Historical Park, 116 Fall Street, Seneca Falls, New York 13148, (315) 568-2991. Historical sites connected with the origins of the women's rights movement.

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